

Charter Township community. He hosts an annual election for the Belleville High School student government, utilizing voting procedures and materials to simulate real-life voting procedures. This exercise provides participants with important firsthand exposure to civic life. Mr. Wright also handles election worker recruitment and voter registration drives, and is well-known throughout the community for his charitable efforts. These actions have helped create a civic-minded community that is actively engaged in public life.

Mr. Wright has received widespread acclaim for his public service to Van Buren Township. In addition to being named Clerk of the Year, he has served as a Township Director for the board of the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks and representative to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, where he works with other local officials to coordinate regional public initiatives. Mr. Wright also holds several professional certifications, including the Certified Municipal Clerk and Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk designations, and serves as a Notary Public while providing training to the Township staff. His dedication and efforts on behalf of Van Buren Township are worthy of commendation, and it is my hope that Mr. Wright continues his diligent work on behalf of the area residents in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Leon Wright for being named 2017 Township Clerk of the Year. Mr. Wright has been a dedicated public servant as Township Clerk.

NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride as I join with millions of people around the world who are honoring the life and legacy of South African President Nelson Mandela on the day that the United Nations General Assembly has designated "Nelson Mandela International Day", in recognition of his lifetime of service in South Africa and all over the world.

In his 95 years of life, President Mandela, or 'Mandiba' as he was affectionately called, was a revolutionary and transformative leader who forever changed the world through his steadfast dedication to freedom, equality, and human rights. After spending 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela became the first black South African to be elected President in what was also the first free, multi-racial, democratic election in South African history. While President Mandela used his administration to dismantle apartheid, combat institutional racism, and begin the process of racial reconciliation in his country, his efforts also taught the world the power of one man having the fortitude to sacrifice his own ideals for a cause greater than himself.

Beginning with his time as the founder of the African National Congress Youth League and extending beyond his tenure as President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela led the anti-apartheid movement and inspired a generation of activists. To me, however, Nelson Mandela

was more than a world-renowned hero—I had the distinct honor and privilege of calling him a friend. I credit him for his courageous leadership of the international anti-apartheid movement which encouraged me to join in the fight and is still, to this day, one of the most defining moments of my life and career.

During the 1980s, I served as the Los Angeles Chair of the Free South Africa Movement where I held regular meetings with community leaders, organized countless anti-apartheid rallies and marches, and led an overnight sit-in at the South African Consulate General Office in Los Angeles.

As a member of the California State Assembly, I fought for nine years for the passage of Assembly Bill 134 which was signed into law in August of 1986 and forced California to divest \$12 billion in state pension funds tied to the apartheid regime in South Africa. I also put my own freedom on the line when I was arrested for protesting the apartheid regime in front of the South African Consulate in Washington, D.C.

In 1990, I had the distinct honoring of chairing the welcome committee for the Los Angeles stop on Nelson Mandela's eight-city U.S. tour and helped organize a concert and rally attended by 90,000 people in the Los Angeles Coliseum which was filled to capacity.

In 1991, I took my first trip to South Africa after the ban on the African National Congress was lifted and the international boycott of South Africa was ended. During that inspirational trip, I joined with other international representatives in welcoming the end of the ban on the ANC and working for Nelson Mandela's release from prison, and I also traveled with the official United States delegation to South Africa in 1994 to attend his inauguration as President of South Africa. In 1998, I was honored to welcome President Mandela to the United States once again, this time to receive the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal.

For Mandela's 95th birthday in 2013, I led the Congressional Black Caucus and Members of Congress in organizing a bipartisan celebration of his life and legacy. The hour-long event filled Emancipation Hall to capacity and included most of the congressional leadership, including House Speaker John Boehner (ROH), Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI (D-CA), Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senate Minority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY). These leaders were joined by a large group of civil rights leaders, members of the African Diplomatic Corps, and the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa.

Five months later upon his passing in December of 2013, I traveled to South Africa once again to attend his Memorial Service.

So as we pause to reflect on Nelson Mandela's memory today, on what would have been his 99th birthday, let us all remember what he taught us when he said, 'What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.'

Few embody this quote better than Nelson Mandela himself, and it is my sincere hope that my own career in public service lives up to his extraordinary example.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for Roll Call vote No. 380, on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.J. Res. 92, Granting the consent and approval of Congress for the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia to amend the Washington Area Transit Regulation Compact. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes Monday, July 17, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call votes 379, 380, and 381.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 17, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues Congresswoman PLASKETT and Congressman VEASEY for hosting this special order resisting voter suppression on both the state and federal level since the Supreme Court struck down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act in the disastrous *Shelby County v. Holder* ruling of 2013.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a watershed moment for the Civil Rights Movement—it liberated communities of color from legal restrictions barring them from their essential right to civic engagement and political representation.

And yet, more than half a century later, we are still discussing voter suppression—something which should be a bygone relic of the past, yet continues to undercut racial minorities, immigrants, women, and young people.

Uncaged by the *Shelby County* ruling, 14 states took extreme measures to enforce new voting restrictions before the 2016 presidential election.

Many of these states have experienced increasing numbers of black and Hispanic voters in recent elections.

If not for devious, state-sponsored voter suppression policies like discriminatory voter ID laws, reduced early voting periods, and voter intimidation tactics that directly or indirectly target racial minorities, the election might have had a drastically different outcome.

To my dismay, many of the civil rights that I once fought for as a student and young lawyer have stagnated or been rolled back by conservative state and federal officials over the years.

To add final insult to injury, the Trump Administration has issued an Executive Order establishing an Election Integrity Commission to